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FROM

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THE NAVAL CAREER OF CAPTAIN JOHN MANLEY OF MARBLEHEAD

By ROBERT E. PEABODY

[Seventy-five copies reprinted from the HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF THE ESSEX INSTITUTE, Volume XLV.]

ESSEX INSTITUTE
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
1909

Essex ss. To the Sheriff of the County of Essex greeting

Whereas at the Court erected to try & condemn all vessels that should be found infesting the sea coast of America & brot into either of the counties of Suffolk Middlesex or Essex, held at Ipswich in said county of Essex on Thursday the eighteenth day of April in the year of our Lord 1776, by me Timothy Pickering jun. Esq. judge of the same court, the brigantine named the Nancy, commanded by one Robert Hunter, & her appurtenances & cargo, were by me the said judge condemned, & decreed to be sold. & the monies thence arising to be disposed of as herein after is directed, of which decree execution remains to be done. You are therefore hereby commanded to sell the said brigantine and her cargo, & appurtenances, at public vendue; and of the monies thence arising you are to pay the charges of trial and condemnation, being fifteen pounds eleven shillings and a half penny, to Jonathan Glover of Marblehead merchant the libellant, and your own fees, and the residue you are to deliver to John Manly and his company, the captors of said brigantine, or to their agents or attornies, for the use and benefit of said captors and others concerned therein And when you shall have so done, make return of this warrant and of your doings therein, unto me.

Given under my hand & seal at Salem the twenty third day of April in the year of our Lord 1776

Timothy Pickering jun

Warrant for the sale of the prize brigantine Nancy and her cargo.

Rece'd Beverly Augt 26 1776 of Williams Bartlet Two hundred dollars on Ac of any Dr'd Money

John Manley

Receipt signed by Capt. John Manley.

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ESSEX INSTITUTE
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
1909

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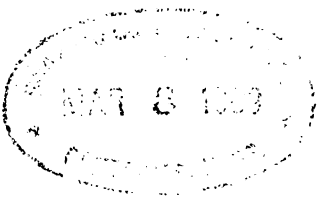

The Author.

THE NAVAL CAREER OF CAPTAIN JOHN MANLEY OF MARBLEHEAD.

BY ROBERT E. PEABODY.

The story of the American War of Independence has been told many times. Its important diplomatic events and great battles are recorded in every school history of the nation and its famous statesmen and military heroes are well known. Historians have preserved in much detail the exploits of the Continental Army, but concerning the operations of the Americans upon the sea, during the Revolution, they seem to have known and certainly to have said but very little. With the exception of John Paul Jones the name of no American naval hero of the Revolution is familiar today, although it is safe to say that but for the energy and enterprise of the Continental seamen the result of the Revolution would have been far different. Without doubt the reason for this neglect on the part of historians is due to the fact that our early naval records are far from complete, and thus a certain veil of mystery shrouds our sailor heroes. Many important engagements and captures took place of which we know little or nothing, for the larger number of our fighting craft were privateers and their exploits are not to be found in the nava archives. It is this very lack of definite facts together with the romance that always surrounds tales of rich prizes, daring adventures, and crews "armed to the teeth,"

that makes the exploits of our early sea fighters such an inviting field for study.

No more typical story of the life of the Revolutionary naval men and privateers can be found than the career of John Manley of Marblehead. At the time of the Revolution and for a number of years after he was one of the most famous naval officers in the Continental service, but with the lapse of time he has gradually become forgotten and now his name no longer retains that place in history to which his achievments justly entitle him. It is therefore most interesting to study the active and eventful career of this neglected hero and to bring to light again his once famous deeds. But before beginning on the story of Manley's life, it may be well to look into the circumstances which brought him before the public eye.

Apparently it was not for some time after war had begun that the Continental Congress appreciated what a powerful weapon they possessed in the American ships and sailors. All through the spring and summer of 1775, British men-of-war were continually capturing American merchant vessels and making many depredations along the coast.* Except for an occasional spirited resistance, however, no official retaliatory measures were taken by the Americans. To be sure, there were many small brushes between Continental and British vessels in which the British were often worsted, and every now and then some venturesome Yankee skipper captured an English merchantman and quietly brought her into port. But such captures although undoubtedly known to the Continental Congress were not officially recognized by them.† At that time Congress had not resolved upon an actual separation from England and was therefore anxious to prevent as much as possible anything that might be construed as open rebellion.

During the spring and summer of 1775, Washington

*Current issues of the newspapers of the time give notice of many captures of American merchant vessels by British men-of-war. The most important of these depredations by the British was the burning of Falmouth (now Portland, Me.),in Oct., 1775.

†Such unofficial captures were very numerous during 1775. The newspapers mention a great number and many more took place which are not recorded. Often people living along the coast would put out in whaleboats and capture British merchant vessels that ventured too near the shore.

with his Continental army was besieging the British forces in Boston and by August he had made his blockade so effective that it was practically impossible for the British to obtain any supplies or provisions from the surrounding country. Owing to the rebellious state of the country, however, few provisions had been received from that source and it became necessary to procure supplies from the British colonies in Nova Scotia, the West Indies, and from England, and consequently vessels laden with every sort of stores for the army were continually passing into Boston. It is possible that Washington was not aware of the extent of this traffic, but in his army was Col. John Glover of Marblehead, who from his home could easily see the great number of vessels passing unharmed into Boston. Accordingly in August, Glover came to Washington and laid the facts before him, demonstrating in the first place that so long as the provision vessels were allowed to get into Boston, the British army would not submit, and in the second place, that the capture of these vessels would supply the Continental army with stores of which they were in great need. Washington immediately saw the force of these arguments and commissioned Glover and a certain Col. Stephen Moylan to superintend the fitting out of one or more vessels at the Continental expense to prevent this traffic. We do not find that Washington received any authority from Congress to do this but apparently he made the move as an incident in his siege of Boston and under his own authority as general of the army.

John Glover in times of peace was a fisherman and owner of several fishing vessels. Although a citizen of Marblehead, about a year before the beginning of the war he had purchased a wharf and storehouse at Beverly and had transferred there his fishing business. Taking one of his own vessels, the "Hannah," a small schooner, he proceeded to fit her out with a few guns and in other ways transform her from a peaceful fisherman into an armed vessel. By Sept. 2d, 1775, the "Hannah" was ready for sea and Washington commissioned Nicholas Broughton* of Marblehead, a captain in the Continental army, to

*American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, p. 633.

command her with a crew made up of soldiers from Glover's "Amphibious Regiment."* His orders were "to take and seize all vessels as may be found on the high seas or elsewhere, bound to or from Boston in the service of the Ministerial Army, laden with soldiers, arms, ammunitions, or provisions, for or from said Army." Accordingly on Sept. 5th, Broughton sailed from Beverly in the "Hannah" and two days later he captured and brought into Gloucester the large unarmed ship "Unity," an American vessel which had been captured by the British.†

In the meantime, however, the British army's provision vessels were constantly passing into Boston, so on Oct. 4th Washington ordered Glover to charter more vessels and fit them out.‡ In the next few days, therefore, four schooners were chartered by Glover, from Marblehead people, in the name of the United Colonies of North America. They were chartered at the rate of one dollar a ton per month and all were small fishing schooners bearing the names of "Hancock," "Lee," "Franklin," and "Warren."§ Glover and Moylan immediately set to work to fit out these vessels, the "Hannah," "Franklin," and "Warren" at Beverly, and the "Lee" at Marblehead, and the preparations progressed as rapidly as possible under the difficulties of obtaining the necessary supplies and armament.‖

In the meantime, on October 12th, Washington received a letter from Congress¶ which commissioned him to dispatch two of these vessels to the Gulf of St. Lawrence for the purpose of intercepting two unarmed British brigs bound from England for Quebec, with arms, powder, and military stores for the British army in America. "The Hanock" and the "Franklin" were selected for this service and sailed October 21st, Capt. Broughton and his

*So called because its members were largely composed of fishermen and sailors from the Essex County coast towns who were as much at home at sea as on land. It was Glover's men that ferried the Continental Army across the Delaware and across New York harbor at the time of the battle of Long Island.
†American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, p. 668.
‡American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, p. 948.
§Original bills of charter in possession of Beverly Historical Society.
‖American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III. p. 1251.
¶Am. Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, p. 1087.

crew from the "Hannah" taking the former and Capt. John Selman of Marblehead with a detachment of Glover's regiment manning the "Franklin." The "Warren" and the "Lee," Washington reserved to cruise off Boston harbor. Capt. Waters of the New Hampshire troops was appointed captain of the former, and the command of the "Lee," on the recommendation of Glover, was given to John Manley of Marblehead.*

A more able man for the position could not have been chosen. Born in 1733, on the shores of Tor Bay near Torquay, Devonshire, England, he had followed the sea from boyhood. When a young man he had crossed the Atlantic and settled at Marblehead where, at the time of his assuming command of the "Lee," he was the captain of a merchant vessel. Of Manley's domestic life little is known. On Sept. 27, 1764 he married at Marblehead, Martha Hickman, of that town. A peculiar circumstance of his marriage was the fact that he was married under the name of John Russell. The reason for this is not known, but he and all his descendants were known at Marblehead by that surname. In public life, however, and everywhere except at Marblehead, he went by his given name of John Manley. By this marriage he had at least two sons and three daughters, all born before 1775. Manley evidently lived in Marblehead from the time he came to America until he entered the service of the United Colonies in 1775, after which he moved to Boston. A bold, fearless, and experienced seaman and an ardent patriot of the American cause, he was well fitted to become one of the fathers of the great United States Navy.

On October 17, 1775, Washington approved Manley's appointment and a few days later gave him his orders which like those first issued to Broughton empowered him to "take and seize all vessels bound to or from Boston in the service of the Ministerial Army." His crew consisted of fifty men from Col. Glover's regiment,† all of whom were still considered members of the army and received their wages from the paymaster of the army, so that they

*American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, p. 1083.
†American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, p. 1251.

were actually soldiers detailed for sea service. But it made very little difference whether they were officially soldiers or sailors for all of them were men brought up along the shores of Essex County and as much at home afloat as on dry land.

There has been much confusion regarding the manner in which these armed schooners were commissioned. Some historians call them naval vessels. Thomas Clark in his "Naval History" speaks of them as privateers, and Edgar S. Maclay in his "History of the Navy" calls them State cruisers. Practically all writers take one of these three opinions, but a careful study of the American Archives supplemented by the information contained in the original documents in the possession of the Beverly Historical Society shows the real status of these vessels. They were fitted out and commissioned by Washington, as General of the Continental Army, in connection with his siege of Boston, solely to intercept supplies going to the British army in Boston. They were chartered at the Continental expense, but their captains were captains in the army of the United Colonies and their crews were soldiers from the army who still received their pay from the army paymaster. The vessels were under the control of Washington as leader of the siege of Boston.

The "Lee" is said to have been a half-decked schooner of 72 tons and had been used by her owner, Thomas Grant of Marblehead, as a fishing vessel.* For that work she was rigged, like other boats of her class, with a mainsail, foresail, and jib; but when her owner occasionally sent her on a trip to the West Indies she was equipped with a big squaresail on the fore topmast, thus making her what is technically known as a topsail schooner. It was this latter rig that she carried while in the service of the United Colonies. Her armament consisted of ten swivels and four 4-pound cannon, the latter having been lent by Capt. John Derby of Salem. Twenty rounds of ammunition were supplied for each cannon and swivel.†

After many exasperating delays, especially in procuring

*Original papers in possession of the Beverly Historical Society.
†American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, p. 1251; 5th series, Vol. III, p. 1068.

the ammunition, on October 27th Glover and Moylan were able to send to Washington the cheering news that "Capt. Manly's vessel is all ready and we now only await the collecting together his hopeful crew to send him off." The following day the crew went aboard and on Oct. 29, 1775 the armed schooner "Lee," Capt. John Manley, sailed from Marblehead with the pine tree flag flying defiantly at the main truck.*

The next we hear of the "Lee" is on November 1st, when for some reason she put into Plymouth. Here she was detained by head winds till the 6th, when she went out to sea again. In the next few days Manley fell in with his first prize, a small Continental schooner loaded with fire wood, which had been captured a few days before by the H. M. S. "Cerebus," then cruising in Massachusetts Bay. The little vessel was being sent in to Boston with a prize crew on board, consisting of the master, who was a midshipman, and a crew of two marines and four sailors from the "Cerebus." Manley had little trouble in retaking her and sent her into Marblehead.†

For over a fortnight after this event Manley cruised in Massachusetts Bay with little success, and dissatisfaction was expressed with the armed schooners. "I am in very great want of powder, lead, mortars, indeed most sorts of military stores," wrote Washington to Congress, and added, "A fortunate capture of an ordinance ship would give new life to the camp, and an immediate turn to the issue of this campaign."† On Nov. 26th he sent word to Capt. William Bartlett, his agent at Beverly, that an English merchant ship in convoy of a frigate had arrived at Boston about a fortnight before, but that the brig "Nancy" loaded with a very valuable cargo of military stores, which had been in company with them, had not yet arrived, and her non-appearance was causing much anxiety to the British in Boston. Manley was in Beverly at that time taking on provisions and having received this news he immediately sailed in hopes of intercepting this valuable craft. Three days later, on November 29th, while cruising about

*American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, pp. 1208, 1251, 1126.
†American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, pp. 1345, 1378, 1531.
‡American Archives, 4th series, Vol. III, p. 1037.

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FROM

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first and most important naval heroes. An enthusiastic citizen of Beverly wrote after Manley had brought in the Virginia sloop, that "as many towns contend for the honour of his birth as they did for that of Homer's." However true this may be, Washington was quick to appreciate Manley's ability as a naval commander and, on January 1st, 1776, when there was a reorganization of the armed schooners, he appointed him commodore of the fleet.* Manley relinquished command of the "Lee" to Capt. Waters and hoisted his pennant on the schooner "Hancock," a vessel of almost exactly the same size as the "Lee," but a faster sailer. Manley had as officers on the "Hancock," Richard Stiles, 1st Lieutenant and Nicholas Ogilby, 2d Lieutenant. The other vessels of his fleet were the schooners "Lee," Capt. Daniel Waters; "Franklin," Capt. Samuel Tucker; "Harrison," Capt. Charles Dyer; "Lynch," Capt. John Ayres; and "Warren," Capt. William Burke. These vessels were now placed under the authority of the newly formed Marine Committee of Congress although they still remained under the command of Washington, during the siege of Boston. Their terms having expired on Dec. 31st, many of the soldier crews returned to the army. New crews were obtained from the men of the seacoast towns, and all wages were paid by the Marine Committee. Thus the armed schooners became the embryo of the great United States Navy.

These six little schooners cruised around between Cape Ann and Cape Cod capturing whatever British vessels they fell in with. On Jan. 25, 1776, while cruising in the Bay, off the mouth of Boston harbor, Manley, in the "Hancock," sighted the ship "Happy Return," of 130 tons, Capt. Hall, from Whitehaven for Boston with coal and potatoes. He gave chase and succeeded in capturing her just before she got into harbor, while in full sight of the British fleet lying in Nantasket Roads.† Putting a prize crew on board the "Happy Return," Manley started to take her into Plymouth, but when off Cohasset Rocks he sighted a brig bound in to Boston. He immediately

*American Archives, 4th series, Vol. IV, p. 90.
†American Archives, 4th series, Vol. IV., p. 863.

subject of a larger ship, for on April 17, 1776, Congress appointed John Manley to command the Continental 32 gun frigate "Hancock," building at Newburyport, which was one of the thirteen frigates authorized by Congress on December 13, 1775. It is safe to presume, therefore, that on receiving his commission Manley proceeded to Newburyport and was undoubtedly there all summer superintending the construction of his fine new ship. On October 23d, we find the Marine Committee of Congress sending Manley his sailing orders.* It is evident that his ship was far from ready to go to sea, for on November 9th Manley wrote to the Massachusetts General Court that he feared it would be of damage to the "Hancock" to leave her at Newburyport all winter. He asked permission to bring her around to Boston, and, in order to make her passage secure, asked to have some of the guns of the Continental frigate "Boston" sent him at Newburyport as the "Hancock's" own armament had not been procured.† This petition was allowed, the guns were sent down and put on board the "Hancock," and on December 13th she arrived in Boston.

What the "Hancock's" movements were during the next few months is not known, but a letter from Manley to his landlady shows that he was still in Boston on January 16, 1777. In fact it is doubtful if Manley ever fulfilled his sailing orders of October 23d, for on April 11, 1777 the Massachusetts State Council authorized a warrant of "£2,056, 9, 0, for the purchase of 22 12-lb. Cannon for the Continental Ship Hancock," and a few days later £400 more to Capt. Manley "to enable him to put his vessel to sea," which seems to show that the "Hancock" must have laid in Boston harbor all winter awaiting her armament. On April 24th, however, having received news that a British frigate was in the neighborhood and capturing American vessels, the Massachusetts General Court resolved that the "Hancock" and the "Boston" should put to sea in pursuit of her. Accordingly, shortly after the first of May, the frigates "Hancock," 32 guns, Capt. Man-

*American Archives, 5th series, Vol. II, p. 1200.
†Mass. Archives, Vol. 211, pp. 73-74.

ley, and the "Boston," 24 guns, Capt. McNeil, finally got under way. Apparently the two vessels failed to sight the British frigate in the neighborhood and started out on a cruise. Early on the morning of the fourth day after leaving Boston, Manley sighted a strange sail which soon turned out to be a British frigate of about the same size as the "Hancock." The two vessels being on opposite tacks rapidly approached one another and on passing were near enough to exchange broadsides. The British vessel, however, did not wait to continue the action but crowded on all sail to escape. Manley immediately put his ship about and started in pursuit, and the "Hancock" being a very fast sailer rapidly gained on her antagonist. As soon as she was in range the Britisher commenced firing again, but Manley withheld his fire until close aboard, when a brisk engagement began which lasted an hour and a half. At the end of this time the "Boston," which had been out of gunshot, began to draw near and the Englishman seeing with what a superior force he would have to contend, prudently struck his colors. Manley lost eight men in this engagement. On the prize, which proved to be the "Fox," of twenty-eight guns, thirty-two men were killed. A prize crew was transferred to the "Fox" and the three vessels proceeded on their cruise.*

Towards the end of May, in Lat. 39°, they took a brig bound from London for New York, loaded with cordage and duck, which they sent into Boston† and on the same day they fell in with three large transports in convoy of a 64 gun ship but did not engage with them. Manley now turned his course northwards and on June 1st appeared off the mouth of Halifax harbor. This rather imprudent move brought out three British frigates, the "Rainbow," 44 guns, under Sir George Collier, the "Flora" 32 guns, and the "Victor" 18 guns. The Americans immediately scattered, and the "Boston" having a good start easily escaped.‡ The "Flora," however, quickly

*Cooper's Naval History.
†Independent Chronicle, June 19, 1777.
‡On arriving home, Capt. McNeil of the "Boston" was greatly censured for thus abandoning Manley at this critical moment. Public anger ran high; he was court marshalled, and dismissed from the navy.

caught up with the "Fox" and after a short and brisk engagement, took her. In the meantime the "Rainbow" and the "Victor" gave chase after the "Hancock." The wind was very light, and Manley endeavoured to lighten his vessel by pumping out the water from his tanks and bilge. But instead of helping her sailing, this process only put her out of trim and the enemy began rapidly to overhaul her. Seeing that he could not escape Manley now tried to bring his ship around so as to board the "Rainbow," but the wind was so light that before he could carry out this manœuvre, the "Rainbow" was upon him and the "Victor" had him in a raking position. He accordingly struck his colors* and was carried into Halifax where he was imprisoned.

Exactly how long Manley was imprisoned at Halifax we do not know, but on Dec. 14, 1778 the ship "Cumberland" of 290 tons and twenty guns, owned by Stephen Bruce and others of Boston, was commissioned as a privateer with John Manley in command.† Sailing from Boston early in January, 1779, Manley proceeded to the West Indies in search of prizes, but hardly had he reached the Caribbean when he fell in with the British frigate "Pomona," which being a very superior force easily took the "Cumberland" and carried her into Barbadoes. Captain Manley and his officers were imprisoned at Barbadoes and not allowed any of the usual indulgences.‡ It is said, however, that the British frigate "Fox," the same vessel which Manley had captured two years before, was in port at the time and the officers came in a body to the prison and paid him their civilities. After being confined for about a month, Manley and his officers by bribing the jailer effected their escape. Seizing a Bermudian sloop which was in the harbor, they made their way to Martinique, from whence they obtained passage home, arriving in Boston on April 9, 1779.

For about two months Manley remained on shore, but early in June he received a new command.§ Mungo

*After being captured, the "Hancock" became the British frigate "Iris" and later, on Aug. 9, 1781, captured the Continental frigate "Trumbull."
†Mass. Archives, Vol. 169, p. 367.
‡Independent Chronicle, Apr. 15, 1779.
§Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 170, p. 148.

Mackey and others of Boston having fitted out a privateer ship called the "Jason"* of 200 tons, mounting eighteen 6 pounders, were looking for some one to command their vessel. Manley, being unemployed, was selected as captain, which shows that his great naval ability was still respected, in spite of the fact that he had already lost two valuable ships. On June 2d, he received his commission as commander of the "Jason," having under him a crew of one hundred and twenty men with Nathaniel Thayer as 1st lieutenant and John Frost as 2d lieutenant. On June 19th, the "Jason" sailed from Boston, proceeding first to Portsmouth where she took on 2d lieutenant Frost and the remainder of the crew.† Leaving the latter port early on the morning of the 22d she stood out to sea on her cruise. When well clear of the land the lookout reported two sails directly ahead. Capt. Manley and Lieut. Thayer immediately ascended to the foretop and soon pronounced the vessels to be a frigate and a brig, but were unable to determine whether they were friend or foe. Waiting therefore until they got a little nearer, the "Jason" was put about, and the moment this was done the vessels gave chase, proving beyond a doubt that they were British. All sail was now crowded on the "Jason" to get back safe into Portsmouth, but the enemy gained so rapidly that when off the Isles of Shoals they were only two gunshots astern. In the meantime a heavy thunder squall had been making in the west and at this critical moment suddenly struck the "Jason." Joshua Davis one of the crew thus describes this incident: "When the squall struck us it hove us all aback—when we clued down. In ten seconds, the wind shifted on our starboard beam, and shivered our sails. In a few seconds more the wind shifted on the starboard quarter, and struck us with such force, that hove us on our beam ends, and carried away our three masts and bowsprit. She immediately righted and the squall went over."‡ The two British

*The "Jason" was formerly an English ship and had been captured by three American men-of-war on April 20, 1779.— *Cooper's Naval History*. Vol. I, p. 189.

†MS. Journal of Wm. Russell, Manley's clerk on the "Jason," in the Essex Institute.

‡Narrative of Joshua Davis, Boston, 1811, p. 4.

vessels in the meantime had all they wanted to look out for themselves and drifting rapidly out to sea were not seen again. Manley accordingly set his men to clearing away the wreckage, and putting up jury masts and sails stood in between the Isles of Shoals and Portsmouth and came to anchor.

During the squall one of the crew was knocked overboard and drowned, and this, together with the fact that Manley had already lost two ships under his command, led the crew to think none too highly of their captain and to look on him as a "Jonah," or bringer of ill luck. They accordingly mutinied and refused to do any work towards re-rigging the ship unless she was taken into port which would give them a chance to desert. The manner in which Manley handled the situation is graphically described by Joshua Davis.

"The captain asked Mr. Thayer why the people were not at work; and was told they wished to get into the harbour first. The captain answered, 'I'll harbour them,' and stepped up to the sentry at the cabin door, took his cutlass out of his hand and ran forward and said, 'boatswain, why do you not go to work?' He began to tell him the impropriety of getting the masts in where the ship then was; when Capt. Manley struck him with the cutlass onthe cheek, with such force that his teeth were to be seen from the upper part of his jaw to the lower part of his chin. He next spoke to John Graves, and interrogated, and was answered in a similar manner, when the Captain struck him with the cutlass on the head, which cut him so bad that he was obliged to be sent to the hospital with the boatswain. The Captain then called the other to come down and go to work. Michael Wall came down to him; the Captain made a stroke at him which missed, and while the Captain was lifting up the cutlass to strike him again, Wall gave him a push against the stump of the foremast and ran aft. The captain made after him. Wall ran to the main hatchway and jumped down between the decks and hurt himself very much. The captain then, with severe threats, ordered the people to go to work. They went to work and stepped the masts, got the top-

masts on end, lower yards athwart, the topsail yards on the caps, topgallant masts on end, sails bent, running rigging rove, boats on booms, etc., and all done in thirty-six hours."

Having completed his repairs Manley continued on his cruise without putting into port, and a week or so later appeared off Sandy Hook where he stood back and forth awaiting a prize. On July 23, 1779, about three in the afternoon two brigs were sighted, which as they approached were seen to be English. Joshua Davis thus describes the engagement:

"Our captain ordered every man to his quarters. The enemy hove upon the wind with his larboard tacks on board, run up his courses, hoisted his colours, and gave us a broadside. Our captain ordered the sailing master to get the best bower anchor out, so that the bill of it should take into the fore shrouds of the enemy. It was quickly done. The captain ordered the helm hard a port, which brought us along side. The anchor caught their fore rigging. Our captain then said, 'fire away, my boys.' We then gave them a broadside which tore her off side very much, and killed and wounded some of them. The rest all ran below, except their captain who stood on the deck like a man amazed. Our captain ordered Lieut. Frost to go out on the driver boom and get on board of her, and send the captain on board of us, and keep the prisoners below. It was done; and as soon as the captain came on board of us, our men on board of her cut away all her fore rigging and pushed her ahead, to clear our anchor. When we got disentangled we bore away for the other privateer, that began to run from us. We gave her a few shot from our bow chasers, and she hove too. Our captain told them to take their boat and come on board. They answered 'our boat won't swim.' Our captain said, 'then sink in her; you shall come on board or I will fire into you.' Then they out boat and came on board."

The two prizes were the privateers "Hazard" of eighteen guns from Liverpool and the "Adventurer" of the same number of guns from Glasgow. A large number of the men on the "Hazard" were killed or wounded,

but on the "Jason" the only loss was one man who was struck on the head by a shot and died a few days later. With a prize crew on both of the brigs, Manley started back to Boston, and two days later anchored off Hull. Here the "Jason" remained for several days taking on stores which were brought down from Boston, for Manley did not dare to take his vessel up to the city lest his crew should desert.

On July 30th, having heard that a large fleet of homeward-bound English merchant veseels had just left New York, Manley set sail again in search of them. A few days later while sailing in a very thick fog in the neighborhood of Nantucket Shoals he fell in with a British merchant vessel which reported herself as being bound from Liverpool for New York. He was just about to open fire on her to bring her to, when another vessel was seen looming up through the fog, and then another, and another. Not wishing to be surrounded by a large fleet Manley bore away, but he had not been sailing an hour before the fog lifted and revealed no less than forty good sized merchantmen in convoy of a heavily armed frigate. On sighting the "Jason," the frigate tacked and setting every possible sail made the best of her way to escape. Manley immediately put about after her and was gaining very rapidly when it was noticed that the Englishman had out drags which greatly retarded her progress with the evident desire of bringing the "Jason" within range. Seeing through the ruse Manley tacked, upon which the enemy did the same and, casting away her drags, rapidly overhauled the "Jason." As she drew near, Manley saw that she was of very superior force and that he would be an easy prey to her, when suddenly the fog shut down again and by quickly changing his course he shook off his pursuer.

After this narrow escape Manley continued his cruise by easy stages as far east as the Banks of Newfoundland. On September 8th, he captured an English brig from Bristol, England, for Barbadoes, which he sent back to Boston in charge of a prize crew.* Her cargo consisted of flour,

*Independent Chronicle, Sept. 23, 1779.

beef, and butter, besides a consignment of hats and two bags of Spanish dollars. After this nothing else of note happened until September 30th. Early on the morning of that day a sail was sighted which rapidly approached the "Jason." As she drew near it became apparent that she was a British frigate of considerable strength and Manley accordingly made all sail to get away. The stranger, however, kept gaining slowly and, after chasing all day, about eleven o'clock in the evening she came up with the "Jason." Once more to quote from Davis' account:

"On hailing her we found her to be the Surprise Frigate. They hailed us, 'what ship is that?' We answered the 'Dean.' They ordered us to 'heave too, or they would fire into us.' We replied, 'fire away, and be d——d, we have got as many guns as you.' They then gave us a broadside—Our captain would not let us fire until they got abreast of us. They gave us another broadside, which cut away some of our running rigging, and drove some of our men from the tops. We gave them a broadside which silenced two of her bow guns. The next we gave her, cut away her maintopsail, and drove her maintop-men out of it. Both sides continued the fire until one o'clock. Our studding sails and booms, our sails, rigging, yards, &c. were so cut away that they were useless. Lanterns were hung at the ship's side, between the guns, on nails; but they soon fell on deck, at the shaking of the guns; which made it so dark that the men could not see to load the guns. They broke the fore hatches open, and ran below. Our captain sent the sailing master forward to see why the bow guns did not keep the fire up; but he never returned. The captain then sent the master's mate on the same errand and he never returned. It was therefore thought needless to stand it any longer, and the captain took the trumpet and called out for quarters."

It was one o'clock when Manley surrendered, the fight having lasted "2 glasses and some minutes." The British vessel was far stronger than the "Jason," having 28 guns and 230 men against the "Jason's" 18 guns and 120 men, yet on the "Surprise" fifteen men had been killed

and thirty wounded, while on the "Jason" the loss was only five men killed and a few wounded. A prize crew was now put on the "Jason" and the two vessels started for St. John's, Newfoundland, where they arrived ten days later.* Manley and his crew were then placed on the guardship "Proteus," at St. John's, where they remained until the first of November. They were then ordered to the Mill Prison in England, and sailing from St. John's on November 1st, arrived in England early in December to begin their long confinement.

For a little over two years Manley remained in Mill Prison, although it is recorded that he made three attempts to escape. On one of these attempts he and eleven others got as far as a neighboring town but were caught and brought back and confined in the "Black Hole" for some time as a punishment. At last, early in January, 1782, Manley and several other American prisoners were exchanged. Making their way to France they obtained passage at Dunkirk on a French letter-of-marque bound for America. Twenty-nine days later they landed at Philadelphia and on April 1, 1782, Manley was back again in Boston.†

For the next few months little is known of Manley, but we may easily imagine that he must have had difficulty in obtaining a new command, having already lost three of his ships. During the summer, however, he offered his services to the government again and joined the navy in his previous rank as captain, for in the Independent Chronicle for Sept. 26, 1782 appears the following notice:—

"On Monday 11th inst John Manly, Esq. Captain in the American navy was appointed to the command of the Continental frigate Hague, (late the Deane) in this harbour, agreeable to an order from the Hon. Robert Morris, Esq.; principal agent of marine, investing said command in the senior officer resident in the department. Capt. Manley, at 2 P. M. of the same day, repaired on board, attended by his principal officers, and was welcomed with united acclamations. 13 guns were fired in honour of the appoint-

*MS. Journal of William Russell.
†Salem Gazette, Apr. 4, 1782.

ment—the ship beautifully decorated with colors — and every possible demonstration of joy expressed a general satisfaction."

Manley then assembled all hands on the quarter deck and addressing his crew as "My good lads and jolly seamen," thanked them for their kind reception and promised to do all in his power to make their relations the pleasantest during the coming voyage. Shortly after taking command Manley got his ship under way and sailed for an extended cruise in the West Indies. Of this, Manley's last voyage during the war, we know very little. When thirteen days out he took a ship of 20 guns with a valuable cargo of provisions for the British army in New York.* Later, during December, he made four more captures including a brig loaded with rum, sugar and coffee† and a light ship‡ bound from St. Lucia to St. Martin, both of which he sent back to Boston. On December 26th the "Hague" is reported as sailing from Martinique on a cruise. About the middle of January, while still cruising in the West Indies, the "Hague" was chased by a British fifty-gun ship and after keeping out of reach of his pursuer for thirty-six hours Manley unfortunately ran ashore on a sand bar near Guadeloupe. The fifty-gun ship on coming up was joined by three other British ships of the line, one of them a 74, and all four vessels anchoring with springs on their cables within gunshot of the "Hague," opened a tremendous fire. For two whole days the American vessel withstood and returned this cannonading. On the third, however, Manley succeeded in floating his ship and according to Clark, our early naval historian, "hoisting continental colors at the main-top-gallant-mast, she fired thirteen guns as a farewell defiance," and escaped, eventually arriving safely in Boston.§

Under the date of January 26, 1783, Manley writes from Guadeloupe to friends in Boston concerning this episode: —"I have been drove on shore, after a thirty-six hours chase, by a 50-gun ship, and lay at the mercy of

*Maclay's History of American Privateers, p. 204.
†Independent Chronicle, Jan. 30, 1783.
‡Probably the ship "Ballier" of 340 tons, Wm. Paxton, master, which was advertised for sale in Boston, on Mar. 25, 1783. *Independent Chronicle*, Mar. 25, 1783.
§Clark's Naval History, Vol. 1, page 168.

her incessant fire for two days; who with the assistance of a 74 (and two other sail of the line to back her) were not very sparing of a heavy and brisk cannonade. However, without a man killed and only one slightly wounded, and my damages repaired, in hull, masts, &c., &c., it is with pleasure I look to the prospect of getting out to-morrow, for Martinquo, Port-Royal, for heaving down.

"Enclosed is a copy of a letter from his Excellency, the Governor, to me, which I request you to publish, as it may satisfy those who wish to entertain doubts, that my conduct has met the approbation of our Allies, as far as they had an opportunity of judging; and besides, the count appears to possess that friendship for America, which it ever gives me pleasure to find in the bosoms of distinguished foreigners.

"I am, gentlemen, your very humble servant,

JOHN MANLEY."*

The following is the letter from the French governor to Manley and shows the high esteem in which he was held by our allies in the West Indies:

"Basseterre, 1st January, 1783.

"I had the honour, Sir, to receive your's, dated 13th instant, and it was with the greatest pleasure I heard of your good conduct, courage and bravery, that you showed, in defending a frigate trusted to your care. You have perfectly fulfilled the duty of a brave officer; and it is with the utmost satisfaction that I pay this tribute to your valour. The second Commandant of the Colony, the one of Port Louis, and all the officers who sent you assistance, have entered into his Majesty's intention, who wills, that his allies receive from his subjects their assistance and protection. In consequence, Sir, they have my approbation to continue their asssistance as long as you may be in want. I have wrote to M. the Marquis de Bouillé, upon a request which was made by your desire, for eight or ten cannon, English nines. This Commandant General

*Salem Gazette, Feb. 27, 1783.

will let me know, and shall have the honour to communicate to you.

"Perhaps you may not find in the Colony all what is necessary to heave down your frigate; that you will certainly get at Martinico; and you will find in all French places, a friendship for your nation, and a true esteem for the brave; and, Sir, you have already given proof that you are worthy the title. I should be very happy that circumstances would procure me the pleasure of your acquaintance. If I can be of any further service, I shall do it with pleasure. I have the honour to be, &c., &c.

(Signed) DAMAS.

"Claud Charles, Viscount de Damas, Marshal de Camp of the King's Armies, Governor, Lieutenant General for his Majesty of the Island of Guadeloupe, Marigalante, its Dependencies, &c., &c."*

With this action off Guadeloupe, the story of Manley's naval career comes to an end. We know, to be sure, that he paid off the crew of the "Hague" at Boston in May, 1783† and that he remained in the naval service up to his death on Feb. 12, 1793, but beyond that we know nothing. Perhaps it is fortunate that we are thus left in ignorance, for what could be more fitting than to part from this old sea fighter as he fires thirteen guns in farewell defiance of the British ships and sails away into history with the stars and stripes flying at the main-topgallant masthead.

*Mass. Muster and Pay Rolls, Vol. 52, p. 103 K.
†Salem Gazette, Feb. 27, 1783.

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